

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A packaging comprising:

an elongated hollow tube housing with two open ends and with a fixed length that resists axial compression ~~and does not contain any liquid~~;

an elongated member disposed within said elongated hollow tube housing; and
a protective covering enclosing said elongated hollow tube housing with said elongated member;

wherein the packaging protects the elongated member from being axially compressed and contaminated.

Claim 2 (previously presented): A packaging as in claim 1, wherein said elongated hollow tube housing is slightly longer than said elongated member.

Claim 3 (currently amended): A packaging as in claim 1, wherein an open end of said elongated hollow tube housing ~~has a first end and a second end wherein the first end~~ is sealed.

Claim 4 (previously presented): A packaging as in claim 1, wherein said protective covering has a notch formed at one or more of its edges to allow easy opening of the protective covering.

Claim 5 (previously presented): A packaging as in claim 1, wherein said protective covering is made of paper, plastic, or aluminum foil.

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Claim 6 (previously presented): A packaging as in claim 3, wherein said protective covering is made of paper, plastic, or aluminum foil.

Claim 7 (currently amended): A packaging comprising:

an elongated hollow tube housing with two open ends and with a fixed length that resists axial compression ~~and does not contain any liquid~~;

a swab applicator disposed within said elongated hollow tube housing; and

a protective covering enclosing said elongated hollow tube housing with said swab applicator;

wherein the packaging protects the swab applicator from being axially compressed and contaminated.

Claim 8 (previously presented): A packaging as in claim 7, wherein said elongated hollow tube housing is slightly longer than said elongated member.

Claim 9 (currently amended): A packaging as in claim 7, wherein an open end of said elongated hollow tube housing ~~has a first end and a second end wherein the first end~~ is sealed.

Claim 10 (previously presented): A packaging as in claim 7, wherein said protective covering has a notch formed at one or more of its edges to allow easy opening of the protective covering.

Claim 11 (previously presented): A packaging as in claim 7, wherein said protective covering is made of paper, plastic, or aluminum foil.

Claim 12 (previously presented): A packaging as in claim 9, wherein said protective covering is made of paper, plastic, or aluminum foil.

Claim 13 (currently amended): A packaging comprising:

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an elongated hollow tube housing with a fixed length that resists axial compression ~~and does not contain any liquid~~ and with a first sealed end and ~~an~~ second open end ~~wherein the first end is sealed~~;

a swab applicator with a handle and an absorbent tip disposed within said elongated hollow tube housing with the absorbent tip disposed near said sealed end of said elongated hollow tube housing and said handle disposed near said open end of said elongated hollow tube housing; and

a protective covering enclosing said elongated hollow tube housing with said swab applicator;

wherein the packaging protects the swab applicator from being axially compressed and contaminated.